PHANTOM 52

a supernatural storytelling RPG

Phantom 52 is a Roleplaying game where 3-6 characters play the parts of paranormal investigators. Play is moderated by a GM (ghost manager if it makes you giggle) who unfolds the story for the players and acts as referee. The most important rule: what the GM says, GOES.

The setting for the adventure may take place in an old mansion, a graveyard, a castle or outer space. Who cares as long as it's fun and spooky? The game may take only an hour for a quick dip into the abyss, or may need to be broken up into sessions (or episodes) for a longer story to unfold. The purpose of the game is to develop and engage in a rich story with friends. Never let yourselves be bogged down by the rules.

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players start with 12 pts to assign to: Health, Mind, Power, Skill. Round down when determining half the stat. However, a score of zero gives the character a -2 penalty to all actions using that stat, so it's a good idea to put at least 1 pt into each stat. Characters with a score of 6 or higher may play an extra card using that stat, and may play one more for every 6 points in a stat.

Health Points	(**HP♥**)	are determined by taking the full Health Score.
Mind Points	(**MP♦**)	add half yr MP stat to actions using mental faculties.
Power Points	(**PP♣**)	add half yr PP stat to any physical or athletic action.
Skill Points	(**SP♠**)	add half yr SP stat to any action using skill, ability or luck.

Stats are used for passive and active purposes. When making an action, players add half the relevant score to their card total. when something is happening to the character, the full score is used without any bonus.

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players choose an occupation and receive a permanent +2 to their area of expertise.
i.e Reporter, ex-Cop, Scholar, Doctor, Psych student, Medium, Boxer, etc.

players start with 4 cards, relevant to their occupation to begin play. the total value of these cards should be no higher than 12.

CHARACTER INFO FITS ON a 3x5 NOTECARD!! front is for character info, back is for inventory (here is a sample character sheet):

Name:_____ Occupation:_____ Specialty:_____
HP:___MP:___PP:___SP:___ Skills: _____
Story: _____

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Occupation determines specialty as well as backstory. Specialty is the area of expertise (the +2). Skills are rough guidelines for what the character is better able to do.

Players should choose a specific job or background to make for a better story, since that is the goal of the game. These characters will always have an advantage over a character that can "do anything". **Flaws are important**.

For instance, a character who is a Brawler differs from a Solider, just as a Scholar might differ from an Engineer. All of these are better character descriptions than "Tough" or "Smart".

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cards are given as rewards for amazing acts in the course of the story. they are given out at GM's discretion and may be hand-picked at some times or drawn randomly at others. Players begin play with 4 cards relevant to their best stats. The total of the cards cannot exceed 12.

2-10: add half this amount to an action using appropriate attribute. Play these cards BEFORE announcing the action.

faces: playing a face card allows the player to receive a bonus to the relevant stat for multiple rounds, then the card is spent. **Jack:** +6 on two actions. **Queen**: +6 for two rounds. **King:** +6 for three rounds, plus 1 additional action.

Ace: an automatic success. A character who plays an ace also adds one permanent point to any stat, but only during a non-engaging round. Players should think of this as leveling up.

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Rounds can be measured in minutes, hours or days, but that's not how time behaves. It may squeeze during periods of excitement or strrreeetch out during boring stuff. It is better to think of time as being measured by events instead of grains of sand.

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Just because the GM is the referee for the game does not mean they are omnipotent or omniscient. Players may pass notes or "whisper" in secret, just as the GM may pass notes to only one character. However, if characters are taking too long or being too meta, the GM may make the characters pass a test to avoid revealing their secrets.

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During more stretched out rounds, players may make any number of actions, such as read a book, get drunk, knit a sweater for their dead uncle or rearrange the furniture in the room. The GM determines what is too excessive and may restrict certain actions if everyone in the room is standing around bored while someone finishes a chapter.

When play is more engaged and rounds are shorter, players may only make a few quick actions or one longer action per round. Some actions (finishing that chapter while zombies are breaking down the door) require more rounds during this time.

Most actions are resolved by simply describing the action and declaring the appropriate modifier. Players may play a card in their hand for a bonus, but the GM may make the player go into greater detail or even act out the round in order to succeed.

types of actions (and their appropriate stat) include:

- ♥ hearts - magic rituals, healing.
- ♦ diamonds - trick someone, solve a puzzle, do research
- ♣ clubs - break stuff, fight things, run/jump/swim
- ♠ spades - pick a lock, drive a car, use tools or guns

passive situations include:

- ♥ hearts - taking damage, resisting soul drain
- ♦ diamonds - picking up subtext, resisting insanity
- ♣ clubs - blocking attacks, enduring physical strain
- ♠ spades - finding secrets, just about anything else.

Note: most card values will average to 4. Anything higher than that is deemed above average, but our characters aren't ordinary. Anything over 7 is exceptional, though not phenomenal, and a 1 or lower (remember: penalties) is just plain awful and will most likely fail. As play & characters progress, difficulty as well as abilities will scale up.

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The use of magic is rare but incredibly likely when dealing with the sort of foul nasties our characters will face. Magic should be seen as a fluid system of push and pull. It requires concentration, sacrifice and worse than anything else, imagination. Characters using magic must be descriptive when announcing the effects of spells, and the spell may succeed or fail at the GM's discretion.

Spells have a cost which corresponds to a stat/suit. Magic enacts a penalty on the character but can be avoided or diminished by playing a card of that suit. The more powerful or intricate the spell is, the greater the toll. Just as a character with no HP is dead, a character with no MP is insane, SP is unlucky and PP is feeble.

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Phantom 52 is meant to be played with friends (or even enemies!) and should be enjoyed by all. The most important thing to remember is to not be bogged down by the rules and enhance the story as much as possible. If you are the GM and someone is taking too long to decide what to do, well, there are plenty of terrible things you can conjure.

I will publish a sample adventure and possibly a more fleshed out character occupation system depending on how this playtests. Questions, comments or suggestions can be sent to DeadDeerGuts@gmail.com **ENJOY!!**

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WRITE YOUR NOTES BELOW!! GIVE ME FEEDBACK!